20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 OA1 Philippines
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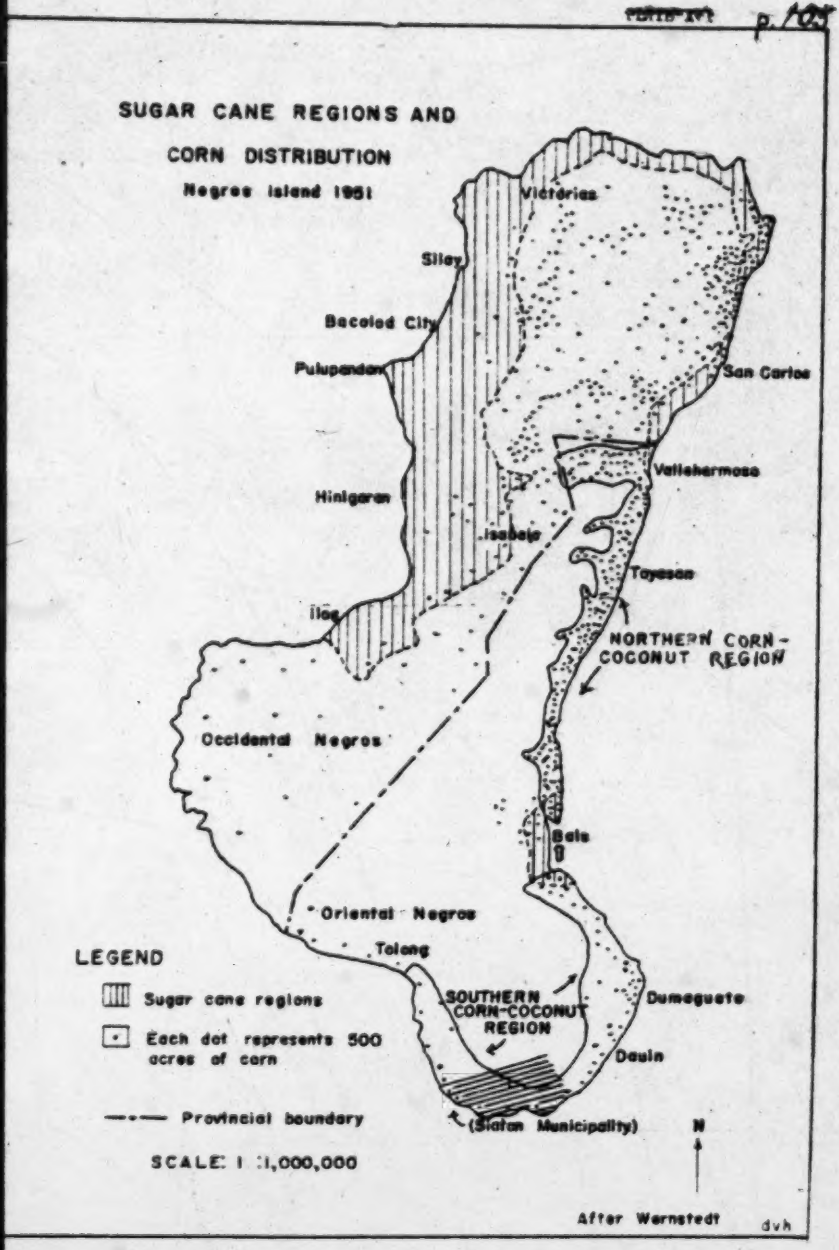

 P 249 433

Spanish regime sugar had become a major export but was a relatively backward industry. "Not until after the free trade developments of 1909 did the sugar industry expand markedly, though the United States already was the chief market."[99]

The major sugar cane-producing areas of the Philippines are central Luzon, Panay, and Negros. In 1950-51 Negros produced nearly 2 per cent of the world's total sugar cane. In contrast to the backward practices associated, for the most part, with the corn-coconut and rice regions of Negros: CB 249 [433]

> The techniques used in the sugar-producing areas represent an entirely different stage in the application of technical know-how to agriculture than do the practices used in any of the other agricultural crops...Mechanized farming is practiced in most of the sugar cane-producing areas where land holdings are of sufficient size to permit economic use. Artificial fertilizers are applied on almost all of the cane fields. The use of modern land farming techniques in sugar cane cultivation bears immediate cash returns, which is not the case with coconuts or other crops.[100] CB

Most of Negros' sugar cane is grown on *haciendas* (plantations) some of which are as large as several thousand acres. The *haciendas* are contracted to supply the mills with cane. In the case of the large Victorias sugar district, more than 450 individual planters supply cane for the Victorias Milling Company. For the most 249 257

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[99] Spencer, op. cit., p.803.

[100] Wernstedt, op. cit., pp.142-3.

part, the planters receive 60 per cent of the sugar obtained from the cane while the mills retain the remainder. In 1952 there were twelve sugar cane mills operating in Negros with only one in Negros Oriental (Bais). 249 257

At Victorias the workers are provided with squat cement houses with running water and electricity. Victorias is a small city with a church (one of the most dramatically modern structures in the Philippines), stores, hospital, recreational facilities, and schools. The general standard of living of the mill workers is much higher than that of the average farmer of Caticugan. Mr. Frederico Ossorio, General Manager of the Victorias Milling Company, has initiated a cooperative vocational school, and other programs to encourage community development and leadership among the workers. 257 361 [511] [874]

Negros' major sugar region begins in the south with Ilog and continues northward and eastward along the littoral. (See Plate XVI.) This region has been divided into the northern and western subregions. On Negros' eastern coast there are two small sugar cane districts, San Carlos and Bais. The sugar cane regions and the plains of Negros coincide closely. (See Plates V and XVI.)[1] 311 249

Wernstedt reports: "The western sugar subregion is the most important sugar-producing region on Negros Island, and the most important single sugar-producing

1 [See pp. 38+105, cat. 311+249 -- Analyst]

region in the Philippines. Here more than 160,000 acres of land are devoted entirely to sugar cane."[101] Table XIII gives the percentage of land devoted to different crops in the western sugar cane subregion of Negros Occidental.

TABLE XIII

Percentage of Land of Each Municipality[102] Devoted to the Major Crops, 1950-51 Western Sugar Subregion

Municipality	Sugar Cane	Corn	Coconut	Rice (a)	Vegetables
Saravia	73	8	*	18	*
Silay	48	12	1	38	1
Talisay	55	14	3	27	1
Bacolod City	42	6	9	41	2
Murcia	47	11	*	39	3
Bago	28	3	1	67	3
Pulupandan	56	1	5	33	5
Valladolid	8	1	2	88	1
San Enrique	21	2	4	72	1
La Carlota	67	8	0	22	3
Pontevedra	44	2	1	51	2
La Castellana	46	9	1	41	3
Isabela	41	8	1	48	2
Hin.gaan	28	8	2	59	3
Binalbagan	41	9	1	45	4
Himamaylan	25	5	7	62	3
Kabankalan	31	6	1	59	3
Ilog	37	8	5	48	2

(a) Indicates both upland and lowland rice
(*) Indicates less than 1 percent

The western subregion with its seven sugar districts produced 43 per cent of the entire Philippine sugar cane

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[101] Wernstedt, op. cit., p. 183.

[102] Wernstedt, op. cit., p. 183. Separate figures for the newly-created Magallon municipality (June 6, 1951) are not given for when these were compiled Magallon was not separated from Isabela.

in 1950-51 or nearly 64 per cent of the total Negros crop.

Wernstedt aptly describes the general landscape of western Negros:

> The sugar lands of Negros present much the same landscape picture wherever they are encountered. In many respects they are more reminiscent of the wheat lands of Midwestern United States, than those characteristic of the Orient. Extensive rolling fields are covered with waving cane, looking not unlike waving wheat from a distance. Modern farm machinery can be seen at work in the fields, small cross-road villages house the agricultural workers, and large gleaming factories dot the landscape like Midwestern grain elevators. All look somewhat incongruous amidst the intensively cultivated rice paddies dotted with lumbering carabaos pulling wooden plows through the fields.[103]

This chapter has aimed to survey the general features of Negros' cultural landscape with emphasis on those factors that highlight the position of Siaton municipality and Caticugan. Caticugan is one of more than 300 *barrios* of Negros Oriental, located in a relatively sparsely settled part of the Southeastern Coastal lowlands. The barriofolk are subsistence farmers whose major crop is corn, although some rice is raised. The western province of Negros is primarily a sugar cane and rice area, with more people, urban settlements, transportation facilities, and modern agricultural methods. The people of Caticugan live outside the cash economy of Negros' sugar *haciendas* and *centrals*. Besides

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[103] Wernstedt, *op. cit.*, p.186.

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(sikwa: Luffa acciangula Linn.); red peppers (sile: Capsicum frutescens Linn.); squash (salabasa: Cucurbita maxima Duc.) and stringbeans. One garden was planted with some halum (Amaranthus viridis Linn.), a stubby plant with edible reddish leaves that is said to be a favorite of the Chinese living in Manila.

Gabi

Gabi, commonly known as taro, is usually planted in Caticugan's canals. A low palm leaf wall is made by weaving leaves between bamboo stakes placed near the inside canal banks. The space between the wall and the bank is gradually filled with sediment where gabi is planted. Gabi is eaten all year, when available, except on Holy Friday; many barriofolk believe if one eats gabi on this religious holiday they will become "nervous" and subject to "shaking fits." A few planted gabi in holes that were only partially filled so when the rains came the water was retained. Ubi is another root vegetable grown in Caticugan; it is not eaten, however, when the plant is leafing for then the roots are said to be fibrous. Little gabi and ubi are raised in Caticugan or sold in Siaton poblacion.

Tobacco

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Only one family raised tobacco in Caticugan; they had planted about fifteen plants in their garden. Most of the tobacco smoked by the people is grown in Bacong and